



State of Wisconsin
Department of Public Instruction
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

****GUEST EDITORIAL****

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Open letter to the Northland Pines School District community

By State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster

It is my distinct honor to congratulate you on the dedication of your new high school. You have much to be proud of in the Northland Pines School District. The success of your district is the result of a lot of hard work and collaboration on the part of many people.

In these challenging fiscal times, building a school is extremely difficult. Your efforts on behalf of students in your school district, and your willingness to come together as a community helped to ensure that your students receive an excellent education in a climate that supports learning. You put your children and their future first. For that you must be commended.

But no referendum is unanimous. There are many who voted against the referenda questions. Through their participation in our democratic process, they used their voices and votes to shape this project. We too often make the mistake of speaking of winners and losers in terms of referenda. The reality is, all of your efforts shape the eventual outcome.

In the end, the Northland Pines School District community invested in a wonderful building for generations of children to come. Your new high school is a testament to the commitment of this community to ensuring quality public education. It symbolizes one of the most powerful statements ever made about education in a democracy. The words of John Dewey, one of America's foremost educators, tell us "What the best and wisest parent wants for his or her child, that must be what the whole community wants for all its children."

Clearly, this community wants the best for its children, and this facility is a model for districts all across Wisconsin. From its beautiful commons area to the new field house and greatly improved classroom space to its Green Council certification, a quality school building like this tells every child that

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learning is important. It tells teachers and principals, experienced as well as aspiring, that the Northland Pines School District is committed to providing quality learning opportunities in every classroom and school building.

And, it becomes the focal point for the entire community—a community center—that offers a place for learning and socializing for residents of all ages.

As I commend the Northland Pines School District community, I want to send a message to the students who will learn in this wonderful new building. Your new high school is evidence of the desire on the part of your community to make sure you have the best resources available to you during your time here. But always remember, “to whom much has been given, much is expected.” Students, we expect great things from you and have no doubt that you will meet and surpass our high expectations.

My very best wishes for a great school year.

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Elizabeth Burmaster is the elected state superintendent of public instruction.

NOTE: To download a high resolution photo of the state superintendent, visit the Department of Public Instruction “Media Contacts and Resources” webpage at < <http://dpi.wisconsin.gov/eis/vm-media.html> >.